DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 401 892 IR 056 135

AUTHOR Kislovskaya, Galina
TITLE Preservation Challenges in a Changing Political Climate: A Report from Russia.
INSTITUTION Commission on Preservation and Access, Washington, DC.
REPORT NO ISBN-1-887334-51-3
PUB DATE Sep 96
NOTE 26p.
AVAILABLE FROM Commission on Preservation and Access, 1400 16th St., N.W., Suite 715, Washington, DC 20036-2217 ($10).
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Archives; Cooperation; *Economic Change; Economic Factors; Foreign Countries; Government (Administrative Body); Information Storage; *Library Collections; *Library Funding; Microfilm; Politics; *Preservation; *Records Management; Social Influences
IDENTIFIERS *Russia

ABSTRACT

In Russia today, substantial political, economic, and social changes directly affect the preservation efforts of libraries and archives. Prepared by the Deputy Director General of the M. I. Rudomino All-Russia State Library for Foreign Literature in Moscow, this report presents a distinctly Russian perspective on the ways in which libraries and archives are attempting to adapt to widespread changes while seeking to maintain their services and introduce new technologies, all with decreasing financial resources. Russian libraries require financial support in addition to verbal support in order to put into action the plans that already exist for preserving Russia's national heritage. This report provides an insider's viewpoint of where preservation efforts stand in Russia. The report covers the following topics: (1) Background--Libraries Under the Soviet Regime, and Preservation Problems; (2) A New Political Environment and its Impact on Preservation--Library Laws for Critical Needs, and Coordinating Functions; (3) The National Preservation Program: Myth or Reality?; (4) Cooperation: National and International Aspects--First Efforts, Other Microfilm Projects, and Microfilm Storage Facilities; (5) Preservation Challenges--Raising Awareness, Management, Preservation Centers, Limitations of Digital Technology, Permanent Paper, and Training; and (6) Closing Remarks. (Author/SWC)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 401 892

The Commission on
Preservation & Access

Preservation Challenges in a Changing Political Climate

A Report from Russia

September 1996

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

M.K. Sitts

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

A private, nonprofit organization acting on behalf of the nation's libraries, archives, and universities to develop and encourage collaborative strategies for preserving and providing access to the accumulated human record.

IR056135

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Published by
The Commission on Preservation and Access
1400 16th Street, NW, Suite 715
Washington, DC 20036-2217

Reports issued by the Commission on Preservation and Access are intended to stimulate thought and discussion. They do not necessarily reflect the views of Commission members.

The cover photograph of the building of the "Cabinet of Curiosities," in which the Library of the Academy of Sciences was located from 1728 to 1924, is from the publication *275 Years Library of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR at Leningrad* published in Leningrad in 1989 (now St. Petersburg).

Additional copies are available for $10.00 from The Commission on Preservation and Access. Orders must be prepaid, with checks made payable to "The Commission on Preservation and Access," with payment in U.S. funds.

This paper has been submitted to the ERIC Clearinghouse on Information Resources.

The paper in this publication meets the minimum requirements of the American National Standard for Information Sciences-Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials ANSI Z39.48-1992.

ISBN 1-887334-51-3

© COPYRIGHT 1996 by the Commission on Preservation and Access. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transcribed in any form without permission of the publisher. Requests for reproduction for noncommercial purposes, including educational advancement, private study, or research will be granted. Full credit must be given to the author(s) and the Commission on Preservation and Access.

Preservation Challenges in a Changing Political Climate

A Report from Russia

Galina Kislovskaya
Deputy Director General
M.I. Rudomino All-Russia State Library
for Foreign Literature
Moscow

September 1996

Commission Preface

This report is one of a series on preservation initiatives abroad. These International Program reports provide an instructive and enlightening look at what is happening in libraries and archives around the world at a time when preservation activities are as varied as the nations in which they operate. The series began in January, 1995, with an overview of the global mission of the International Program. It has included reports from Bulgaria, Canada, Europe, and Latin America.

In Russia today, substantial political, economic, and social changes directly affect the preservation efforts of libraries and archives. Prepared by the Deputy Director General of the Library for Foreign Literature in Moscow, this report presents a distinctly Russian perspective on the ways in which libraries and archives are attempting to adapt to widespread changes, while seeking to maintain their services and introduce new technologies, all with decreasing financial resources.

In commissioning the report, the International Program asked that it cover several issues of interest to the worldwide community: preservation policies and politics in Russian librarianship, preservation challenges, the status of the national preservation program, the value of preservation training, and the national and international aspects of cooperation. The resulting report accomplishes this and more, providing an illuminating, timely, insider's viewpoint of where preservation efforts stand in Russia.

Editor's Note: In preparing this report for publication in the U.S., we have taken care to retain the personal voice of the author, who has been appointed chair of the section on preservation by the Russian Library Association. This report is indeed, as the title notes, a "Report from Russia," supported and distributed by the International Program.

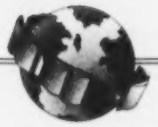


Table of Contents

Introduction 1

Background. 3

- Libraries Under the Soviet Regime 3
- Preservation Problems 4

A New Political Environment and Its Impact on Preservation 7

- Library Laws for Critical Needs 8
- Coordinating Functions 9

The National Preservation Program: Myth or Reality? 10

Cooperation: National and International Aspects 13

- First Efforts 13
- Other Microfilm Projects 13
- Microfilm Storage Facilities 14

Preservation Challenges 15

- Raising Awareness 15
- Management 15
- Preservation Centers 16
- Limitations of Digital Technology 17
- Permanent Paper 17
- Training. 18

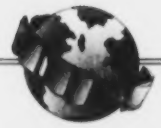
Closing Remarks. 20

Introduction

Our common human memory has accumulated in art, books, manuscripts, newspapers, journals, and audiovisual materials. Over and over again, our knowledge gleaned from the past has saved humankind from making the same mistakes and culminating in disaster.

However, this immeasurable wealth itself needs to be protected and secured. Throughout history the human memory has been wiped out by fires, floods, and powers that be. And memory's legacy, the physical representations of humankind's knowledge and creativity, has been destroyed through the vandalism, ignorance, and dilettantism of custodians and users entrusted with these treasures. The end of the twentieth century is marked by the great attention paid to the preservation of the world's cultural and historical heritage. To a certain extent this testifies to humanity's maturity and provides hope that future generations will inherit much from the enormous treasures, experience, and knowledge gained by previous generations at no little cost.

For Russia, whose historical path badly needs continuity, protecting and preserving its cultural heritage has its own deep meaning. The outstanding Russian philosopher, G.P. Fedotov, wrote: "Russian life laughs at evolution and sometimes rips it apart only to tie up the torn thread once again." To ensure succession in social development, the current generation of librarians and archivists must assume the responsibility of preserving documentary sources. This is how to build a bridge between past, present, and future.



Background

Libraries Under the Soviet Regime

Russia's totalitarian age bequeathed to the country an extremely wide and developed library system. Socialism's founders believed that when building a new society permeated by Communist ideology, a book is a mighty weapon. In part these founders aimed at enlightenment, but they also wanted to impose values on the population of a huge country.

The Communists built over 115,000 libraries, all of which were overwhelmingly uniform in their political views. The giants in the field were, and remain, Moscow's Russian State Library (formerly the Lenin State Library, nicknamed Leninka), with 40 million holdings, and St. Petersburg's Russian National Library (formerly the Saltykov-Shchedrin Public Library, nicknamed Publichka), with 30 million holdings.

Libraries in Russia always have played an important role in the development of science, education, and culture. The Soviet state witnessed a remarkable growth of university, institute, and college libraries. The country's 3,000 university libraries include the oldest: Moscow University Library (ten million holdings); St. Petersburg University Library (five million holdings); and the Tomsk, Kazan, and Saratov university libraries (with approximately five million items each).

Tribute also should be given to the efforts of the Russian Academy of Science, which significantly expanded its own library network to include 375 libraries ranging from the Library of the Academy of Sciences (BAN) and the State Public Scientific Library for Natural Sciences (BEN) in Moscow, to numerous libraries within research institutes. The State Public Scientific Library alone holds 15 million items acquired since the 1960s.

During the Soviet period (1917-91) each ministry had its own network of special libraries headed by a central library. The most noted of these were the Central Research Medical Library and the Central Research Agricultural Library. The corresponding ministries provided allocations for the development of their libraries' network.

Hardly less impressive in scope was the public libraries network that made up 51.1% of all Soviet libraries. Each of the territories, now subjects of the Russian Federation, had a regional library as a main repository, with a universal collection ranging from two to seven million items. These holdings included a comprehensive collection of local publications and served as a basic repertoire of scholarly materials published within Russia and abroad. Generally, each administrative center opened separate libraries for children and young adults. Children's and young adults' libraries, required for each region by the Ministry of Culture, were financed by local administrations.

There were eight prestigious libraries under the Ministry of Culture (that of the USSR and Russian Federation). Later, when the Ministry of Culture of the USSR disappeared, one more library, namely the State Social Sciences Library, got a federal status. These were: the Russian State Library (RSL), the Russian National Library (RNL), the All-Russia State Library for Foreign Literature (LFL), the State Public Historical Library (SPHL), the Arts Library, the Russian Children's Library, the Young Adults' Library, the Russian Library for the Blind, and the State Social Sciences Library.

Despite the existence of such a huge and far-flung library network, access to information was regulated strictly during the Communist regime. Only regional public libraries, the All-Russia State Library for Foreign Literature, and the State Public Historical Library were accessible to the public since academic, university, and special libraries served only their constituencies. Both National Libraries required special permission to use their collections, which tangibly restricted access. The state kept a watchful eye on access to information. In the 1920s the so-called "spetskhrans" (departments for special storage) appeared in research libraries. Their collections contained ideologically pernicious publications, i.e., works of party and state leaders or by those accused of heterodoxy (often including men of letters, representatives of the arts and culture, and dissidents). There were also foreign materials and translated literature. The repertoire of the prohibited publications grew, thus turning spetskhrans into comprehensive collections that were exempt from normal circulation. Furthermore, only large research libraries were allowed to have spetskhrans, whereas in smaller libraries prohibited publications were destroyed in accordance with orders of Glavlit, the government's censorship committee.

In effect, the term access has only recently entered the professional vocabulary of Russian librarians. Access—the right to make full use of a library's complete collection—is still new to the consciousness of Russian libraries. Evidence of this is found in such phenomena as the spetskhrans (in existence until 1985), and various other usage limitations, such as closed stacks with limited access and acquisition lacunae. By definition, access to information as a basic requirement of a democratic society was impossible in the Soviet Union.

Preservation Problems

The deficiency of information created by limited access was aggravated by unsolved preservation problems. The first traces of a systematic approach to preservation can be found in the 1930s when archivists and librarians gathered scattered collections following the cataclysms of revolution and civil war. This period was characterized by an absence of solid knowledge regarding preservation techniques. Restoration was thought of as the only preservation option and was practiced by individuals who inherited its secrets from their parents. Of course, as assessed from today's restoration knowledge, the scientific validity of materials and methods was doubtful and the consequences of treatments unpredictable.

Until the 1960s the state policy in the field of preservation was confined to moving rare and precious collections and valuable publications of historic and artistic value to the federal repositories of the libraries and archives of Moscow and St. Petersburg. It was assumed that centralization would create favorable conditions for protecting documents belonging to Russia's national heritage. Restoration and conservation centers were founded in these major archives and libraries. These centers exercised a profound influence on the development of preservation research in the areas of: permanent paper; deacidification; proper collection maintenance; biological problems of conservation; restoration of leather and paper, as well as of fragile leaves by means of splitting, lamination, and leafcasting; the application of different types of glue in restoration; and the teaching of scientific approaches to conservation. During the Soviet regime, standards for conservation, restoration, stabilization, and storage of documents were adopted. Among prominent researchers and practitioners who contributed to these developments were U.P. Njuksha, M.G. Blank, D.M. Fljate, J.K. Belaya, D.P. Erastov, N.K. Nikolajeva, V.F. Privalov, V.I. Steblevskij, C.A. Dobrusina, Z.P. Dvorjashina, and many others who worked and are still working at the Russian State Library, Russian National Library, Library of the Academy of Sciences, All-Russia State Library for Foreign Literature, Research Institute of Documents and Archives, Research Institute of Restoration, Central Research Laboratory of Document Conservation, Laboratory of Conservation and Restoration, and other institutions.

While the best specialists worked on such conservation aspects as storage conditions, the state, which allocated money for related research purposes, neglected the prerequisite of preservation: Library buildings, key to the success or failure of all attempts to follow preservation standards, were not built with preservation in mind. Constructed in the 1950s and '60s,

ignoring geographical and climatic diversity, the structures built to house libraries were all of a pattern. The smaller municipal public libraries did not even warrant their own building and were generally given a number of rooms on the ground floor or basements of buildings already standing and built for other purposes.

The results of a 1994 questionnaire distributed among regional libraries by the All-Russia State Library for Foreign Literature testify that as a rule library buildings did not meet the requirements essential for preserving library materials. Respondents pointed to a variety of drawbacks or a combination of them, namely: bad foundations, the lack of compulsory ventilation, bad heating and cooling systems, plumbing problems, and incorrect placement of fixed shelves. Not a single library had a system of air conditioning or provisions for extending stacks.

The most frequent complaint has always been the lack of storage space. Libraries' needs long ago exceeded the projected capacity of library buildings. A huge number of collections—mostly prerevolutionary, Civil War, and Second World War newspaper collections—remain in stacked piles. Even much of the rare material that did traditionally get cared for has been located in premises that are far from ideal.

Yet it has to be admitted that rare books were always the focus of preservation attention, be it within a federal or regional library. In conjunction with this, the Russian State Library developed and distributed guidelines on identifying, evaluating, selecting, processing, cataloguing, copying, and restoring manuscripts and other rare publications. In compliance with these guidelines, catalogers of rare books have to include in their bibliographic description an assessment of the physical condition of an item, as well as the date and kind of restoration if ever done.

Uniform approaches to registration, storage, and usage of rare materials proved to be very helpful in safeguarding documents of particular historical and cultural value. Such documents were considered the property of the State Archival Collection. They were stored accordingly in archives and libraries and declared a national heritage. In theory, these rare documents were under the protection of a special law, "On the security and usage of historical and cultural monuments," adopted in 1976. Similarly, the last Soviet Constitution (article 65) of the 1980s proclaimed that "taking care of and preserving historical monuments and other cultural values is the duty and responsibility of USSR citizens."

It must be noted, however, that violations of these declared obligations were perpetuated mainly by the state itself, incapable or unwilling as it was to support adequately archives and libraries. Furthermore, at different times, state officials confiscated rare books without reason. Libraries that had built distinctive collections were almost helpless when faced by mounting preservation problems. Fortunately, in spite of all difficulties, there were dedicated librarians who managed, and still manage, to protect special and general collections.

One of the most dramatic examples of the strains on the Russian library system has been the Russian State Library. Although its stacks were originally designed to house 10 million items, the library now contains 20 million. The concentration of dust exceeds allowed levels by four times. Sulphur oxide content also exceeds the limit by four times, while nitrogen oxide exceeds the limit by 22 times. Temperatures sometimes reach the 26 centigrade mark, with relative humidity as high as 90%.

These frightening statistics are not unique. Similar dramas are developing in other federal and most regional libraries. Of particular concern has been the absence of security, fire alarm systems, and adequate water in case of fire. It is doubtful that existing fire extinguishing systems will prove sufficient in cases of disaster. This was proven by the Library of the Academy of Sciences tragedy in 1988, when a catastrophic fire and the system's inadequate response destroyed a significant portion of rare books because of the improper use of water to douse the flames. Paradoxically, library administrators have been fined frequently by firefighters who act on behalf of the state—yet it is the state that has not provided the means for eliminating the sources of danger.

The state has failed in other ways as well. Whatever special attention the state has paid to restoration, it has not been supportive in developing a system of supplies. Nor has the state introduced preventive preservation methods or measures. Individual libraries with strong restoration and conservation centers are making enormous efforts to reach their preservation objectives without the necessary equipment and supplies. It is not surprising that half of the rare books awaiting treatment are doomed to deterioration.

At the same time, a traditional bias toward preserving selected rare books left general collections in neglect. Since the 1970s the Russian National Library restoration and conservation department has been working on its own technology of mass deacidification. But again, in order to combat this neglect, a promising method that could prevent brittle books from crumbling into dust did not receive proper attention from the state, however much the latter officially proclaimed its adherence to preserving Russia's national heritage.

Another option for preserving the information contained in these documents was microfilming. However, the idea and practice of preservation microfilming was not disseminated to the extent that it should have been. This is especially unfortunate because of the outstanding potential for Russia's military industries to help state libraries with microfilming. With their knowledge of microfilming methods and materials, these industries were in a unique position to help Russia's libraries. Their expertise in microfilming, processing, duplicating, and the training of personnel, as well as in archival storage, would have been invaluable.

The sad conclusion is that the Soviet's official recognition of the importance of preservation did not correspond with the real needs and aspirations of librarians whose best intentions, enthusiasm, professionalism, and in many instances artistic skills were unequal to the task of solving such deterioration on such an enormous scale. The logical outcome has been limited availability of materials, scholarly or otherwise.

A New Political Environment and Its Impact on Preservation

Created and organized into a uniform, even harmonious system under the Soviet political regime, libraries have found themselves in a radically different environment during the past decade. In an open, democratic society—with decentralized power, a market economy, a developed telecommunication infrastructure, and freedom of access to information—libraries set and solve basically different goals and objectives. Librarians must now follow a totally different routine than when libraries functioned in a totalitarian country. Soviet Russia was closed to the rest of the world and strictly controlled access to and dissemination of information. All this has changed, and librarians must change with it.

Today Russian libraries are being affected by reforms in a most dramatic and intensive way. Their social role is being drastically reconsidered, and social requirements and expectations are fundamentally opposite to those demanded by the totalitarian structures of yesterday. In its current transitional period, more than ever Russia needs reliable and rapidly delivered information—new, practical, and fundamental knowledge that can be achieved only via state public libraries. In fact, libraries as sources of information have turned out to be the only institutions that provide free (and free-of-charge) access.

The demands of a new society have become a mighty impetus for a phenomenal growth of readership. Between 1989 and 1993, the rate of the number of readers using the State Public Historical Library, for example, increased 30%. In 1995 the All-Russia State Library for Foreign Literature doubled its 1983 level of readership. Similar trends can be traced in regional libraries, some of which provide evidence of an increase of as much as 80% in readers' usage in a five-year period.

Such an explosion has inevitably led to a conflicting relationship between access and preservation. This is relevant first and foremost to general and serials collections, where heavy use results in irreplaceable gaps. Aware that a considerable percentage of libraries' holdings are lost due to intensive use, mutilation, and theft, librarians should have reacted by purchasing replacement copies and by microfilming serial collections and embrittled books.

What is really happening? Perestroika brought not only benefits but a number of profound crises, one of which is the complete collapse of a centralized system of book trade and book distribution. The old mechanisms have been destroyed, and new ones are evolving. In this context libraries alone set an objective to pursue the tradition of identifying and purchasing publications appearing throughout the country, at least as comprehensively as their collection development policies allow. Libraries are among the few institutions that have proven their willingness to provide the groundwork for informational and cultural unification.

Of course, this is not the only driving force behind the continuing struggle to update collections. It is well known that publications not acquired by libraries have a greater chance of disappearing from the repository of human achievements. Acquisition precedes preservation. At the same time, a lack of resources—the chronic malady of Russian culture in general and libraries in particular—results in the acquisition of only 10-20% of the entire output of the publishing industry. The remaining 80-90% have almost total probability of not being preserved for future use.

Throughout the rest of the world, access to information is attained through acquisition, preservation, bibliographic control, telecommunication, and document delivery. Russia, however,

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

is hindered seriously by how severely behind the rest of the developed world it is in technological applications. And the stumbling block for changing this situation is, as always, shrinking or nonexistent budgets. At the same time, having found themselves on the crest of social change, some inventive and innovative libraries are actively adopting new technologies to facilitate the exchange of information.

Regrettably, not all Russian libraries can overcome difficulties despite their recognition that technology must be improved. The dynamics of change affecting libraries and their growing role in the development of the society has not been understood sufficiently by federal and local authorities. If in the 1980s the libraries' budget within the overall cultural budget reached 41%, in the mid-1990s this figure dropped to 37%.

In fact, the processes currently underway in Russian libraries are extremely contradictory. A shift to federalism, the absence of strict regulations from the central government, the transfer of libraries into regional ownership—all forced libraries to justify their budgets before local authorities, prove their usefulness and necessity, and fight for the right to development and even survival. This resulted in tangible differences in allocated budgets, uncorrelated to regional economic situations. Budgets were decided primarily on such subjective factors as the librarians' level of understanding and their ability to adapt to a new reality, and the recognition by local authorities of the importance of libraries and their social role. But in spite of all this, including the extremely low funding that denies the enrichment of library collections, in general libraries have demonstrated a growing potential in response to increasing societal change.

Library Laws for Critical Needs

In the mid 1990s librarians' activities led to the enactment of two fundamental laws: "The Law on Libraries" and "The Law on Legal Deposit Copies."

The Law on Libraries demonstrates a distinct break with the past by making freedom of access its key notion. It states that every citizen irrespective of sex, age, nationality, education, social status, political convictions, or relation to religion will have the right to library services within the Russian federation territory. All library users have the right of access to libraries and the right of free choice of the library according to their needs and interests. The procedure of access to library stocks and the list and rules of provision of basic services by libraries is established according to library regulations, the legislation on the protection of the State secrets, and the legislation on the preservation of the cultural heritage of the nations of the Russian Federation. A library user may go into court to appeal against a library official's actions as infringing on his/her rights. No state-imposed or other censorship shall allowed that restricts a library user's right to free access to library stocks, nor shall information about library users and users' requests be used, except where such information is for scientific purposes or library service planning.

Another priority of the Law on Libraries is the libraries' "core responsibility for safeguarding particularly important publications and collections qualified as historical and cultural monuments, their timely inclusion into union catalogues, their registration as part of the cultural heritage of the Russian Federation nations, and their inclusion into computerized databases in the framework of federal programs for the preservation and promotion of culture."

The formal commitment of the state to build and maintain library collections also is illustrated by these additional excerpts:

- Manuscripts held in library stocks shall be a component of the Archival Collection of the Russian Federation.
- Library collections built on the basis of a legal deposit copies scheme and containing particularly valuable and rare documents shall constitute cultural property of the Russian Federation nations and be declared historical and cultural monuments under Russian Federation Law. Library collections qualified as historical and cultural

monuments shall be maintained under special security, storage, and usage conditions according to Russian Federation Law.

- If a library is found to be in default of its legally stipulated parameters related to collections designated by the government as historical, then the government can confiscate the collection for safekeeping.
- The liquidation of libraries whose collections have been registered as historical and cultural monuments may only be executed by the library owners with the permission of the specially authorized government body for the protection of historical and cultural monuments, with subsequent provisions for preservation and access to said collections.

According to the Law on Legal Deposit Copy, permanent storage of free legal deposit copies is entrusted to:

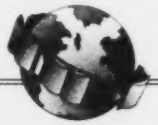
- the Russian Book Chamber
- the Russian State Library
- the Russian National Library
- the Russian Library of Academy of Sciences
- the State Public Library on Science and Technology of the Siberian Division of the Russian Academy of Sciences
- the Khabarovsk Territory Research Library
- the Russian State Library for the Blind (with regard to publications for the blind)
- the All-Russia Patent-Technical Library (with regard to patent documents)
- the Parliament Library of the Russian Federation (with regard to official documents)
- the Federal Collection of State Standards and the All-Russia Classification of Techno-Economic Information, International (Regional) Standardization Rules, Norms, and Recommendations of Foreign Countries (with regard to standards)
- the All-Russia Scientific and Technical Information Center of the Ministry of Science and Technological Policy of the Russian Federation of the Russian Academy of Sciences (with regard to unpublished documents)
- the National Collection of Television and Broadcasting Programs of the Federal Television and Broadcasting Service of Russia (with regard to gramophone records, laser discs, phonograms on magnetic tape, and video films)
- the National Motion Picture collection of the Russian Federation (with regard to films, including cartoons and popular science pictures)
- the Integral Interdisciplinary Research Institute (with regard to computer programs related to electronic publications)
- the Informregister Scientific and Technical Center (with regard to electronic publications, including databases)

Coordinating Functions

The duplication and reproduction of deposit copies to facilitate access is monitored by the Russian Federation Law, "On Copyright and Allied Rights" and "On the Legal Protection of Computer Programs and Databases." The Law on Libraries does not state what federal level body is empowered to formulate national strategies for libraries' development. The Ministry of Culture Statute approved by the Russian government singles out as one of its duties the formulation of state library policy and its implementation. In practice, though, the Ministry of Culture has no mechanism in place to influence the library policy of other Ministries.

Under the Soviet regime the All Union Library Council was responsible for coordinating the activity of libraries belonging to different ministries. However, this council had ceased to exist by 1992. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the All Union Library Council shared the same fate as other Soviet departments. Now the Ministry of Culture's leadership role in a number of important library projects has resulted in various arrangements with other Ministries and their libraries.

Within a wide range of objectives the Ministry of Culture gives a high profile to preservation activities, especially to reformatting originals, as well as the means of conventional conservation and restoration. A noteworthy example is the regional Newsplan launched by the All-Russia State Library for Foreign Literature and partially financed by the library department of the Ministry of Culture. Federal funds also are allocated via the Ministry of Culture to conservation and restoration centers in the Russian State Library, the Russian National Library, and the All-Russia State Library for Foreign Literature; to an emerging regional center in Vladimir; and to Raritet, a nonprofit, nongovernmental school on restoration and conservation. The Ministry of Culture, aware of the drawbacks in preservation training, supports setting up a national school of restoration. Fairly recently it revived a long-standing plan of creating a union stock of items considered to be part of Russia's cultural patrimony. These collections, comprising individual materials, are referred to as book monuments and are expected to lay the basis for developing a national preservation program.



The National Preservation Program: Myth or Reality?

Up until now, Russia has not invested adequate human and material resources for the preservation of library holdings. Neither has it developed a national heritage preservation plan. It would be unfair, though, to say that there have been no attempts in the past to work out preservation strategies for the entire library community.

The report, "The State Conservation Program (Concept approach)," given at the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) General Conference in Moscow (1991) by T. Burtseva and Z. Dvorjashina, drew attention to developing a prototype of a national preservation program by a group of experts from different libraries. But their group worked under the auspices of the All Union Library Council, and with its demise the preservation program was forgotten. More recently, growing preservation needs provided an impetus for reviving the notion of a national preservation program by individual institutions.

Burtseva and Dvorjashina's original draft defined strategies that are more than valid today:

- assessment of physical condition of documents
- proper maintenance of collections
- research in the field of preservation
- mass deacidification
- restoration and conservation with focus on preventive conservation
- training

The updated version of a national preservation program being developed under the Ministry of Culture inevitably incorporates fragments of these concepts. But, in view of serious economic problems, this version highlights:

- investing labor and materials most rationally
- facilitating involvement of research and industrial enterprises to solve preservation problems
- coordinating personal, institutional, and regional efforts
- launching publicity campaign for preservation awareness

Of particular importance, and the object of the two programs, is the aforementioned book monument. This designation originated in the Russian State Library and has been accepted by the initiators of a national preservation program as a generic term for a wide range of materials. Book monuments, comprising important documents and original artifacts, are separated by category and collections. (Thus, the papers of Pushkin would be referred to as a book monument.) They perform cultural, historical, and memorial functions and are registered, stored, and used in a special fashion. The content of the term "book monument" is based on the two meanings of the word monument: a value category, embracing the results of human endeavors and reflecting the history and culture of an epoch; and a unique historic document.

The Russian Union Stock of Book Monuments contains all manuscripts and materials published before the 1800s: that is, documents belonging to the early history of the book. It also embraces more recent, outstanding publications that reflect the most significant achievements in many different spheres of human activity: social, political, economic, technical, scientific, and cultural.

Book monuments fall into the two categories of rare and valuable publications, and press archives. The stock of rare and valuable publications is represented by:

- manuscripts
- incunabula
- West European publications 1600–1830
- publications that appeared in 1500–1800 in cyrillic print
- domestic publications dated 1800–1830 in civil print
- publications reflecting great events and epochs (for example, the Patriotic War of 1812, the Civil War, the first years of Soviet Power, and the Great Patriotic War)
- first editions of publications of outstanding writers, scientists, public figures, and statesmen; reprints containing autographs of outstanding figures; and historically important book collections
- publications designed and illustrated by outstanding artists
- publications in valuable artistic bindings
- best miniature books and publications of unusual form
- publications duplicated in an unusual manner (e.g., engraved text) or printed on special material (e.g., silk, cork, colored paper)
- book collection publications and copies
- rare and valuable book stock, which includes books, pamphlets, newspapers, journals, loose-paper materials, music scores, and maps in all languages.

The draft of the national preservation program, having clearly defined preservation objectives, states its goals as follows:

- building the union stock of book monuments
- developing a system of bibliographic control
- elaborating guidelines on working with book monuments
- providing acquisition systems for the union stock of book monuments
- allocating funds for building this stock
- providing storage conditions
- setting up federal and regional restoration and conservation centers
- introducing new technologies into restoration and conservation
- creating a database on preservation
- developing and implementing an access policy to book monuments
- assisting libraries in recruiting qualified staff for special collections
- creating a system of training
- installing security systems
- introducing new preservation technologies
- coordinating efforts

The plan, estimated to run for ten years, is divided into several projects:

- building the union stock of book monuments
- identifying, registering, and processing collections
- creating an electronic union catalogue
- enhancing access and usage
- promoting conservation and restoration
- increasing education and training
- conducting research
- working with preservation microfilming and digital reformatting
- ensuring the security of collections

The draft of the plan is still under discussion, but in some regions similar approaches already have been approved and vanguard programs are underway. In Udmurtia the National Library is implementing a program called the "Memory of Udmurtia." In Vladimir the regional library is carrying out a plan, "Memory of the Region," which lists among its objectives the reconstruction of lost local materials. An important aspect of this project is the Vladimirian librarians' emphasis on access versus ownership.

Several projects that parallel the concepts of the Russian preservation program already have been launched by individual libraries. As in the U.S. or Great Britain where the initiatives of individual libraries or groups of libraries gave way to national programs (such as the Brittle Books program and Newsplan), in Russia certain areas of preservation that are considered strategic on a national level have begun to be a part of the initiatives undertaken by the Russian State Library, Russian National Library, Library of the Academy of Sciences, and All-Russia State Library for Foreign Literature. The consolidating nature of these libraries is not at all surprising: The level of expertise, efficiency of staff, and professional links with preservation centers abroad are all factors in why these institutions, and not others, have become centers of consolidation. Preservation is an activity that cannot be carried out on a highly centralized level, which means that a national program must be created on a firm foundation of local and regional projects.

Segments of the national preservation program, in which individual libraries or groups of libraries are especially strong, testify to this truth. The Russian National Library's leadership in research undoubtedly will make it a key institution in implementing a research and technology project within the national preservation program. The Russian State Library, on the other hand, with its rich experience in restoration and conservation, might serve as the center of a training project. The All-Russia State Library for Foreign Literature, which has shown interest in preservation microfilming, could serve as a coordinator in this area. Long an explorer of preventive conservation, the Library of the Academy of Sciences might spearhead this approach. Collaboration as a project method is not new elsewhere, but collaborative enterprises are a completely novel concept in Russia. Gradually, however, the idea of working together in an organized way is winning adherents among Russian librarians who understand the primary importance of accepting the principles of cooperation and coordination not only in theory but in practice.

Cooperation: National and International Aspects

First Efforts

In Russia, cooperation, as one of the leading approaches to preservation, has seen more failure than success. Inter-institutional relationships were quite common in the Soviet Union, but when several large and small scale cooperative projects were successfully implemented in different fields of librarianship, preservation was not among them. However, the tendency toward cooperation and coordination has become distinctly stronger within the past one to two years. Economics, service requirements, and technology all play a role in this change. For preservation, sharing resources and expertise has become an incentive of vital importance under current and future economic constraints.

The first preservation cooperative projects to preserve materials in Russia were launched not by Russian but by U.S. librarians. The earliest offer to help Russian libraries came from a consortium of United States libraries. The idea was to create a consortium of Russian libraries which, with the coordination of the U.S. libraries, would test the concept of collaborative work in the Russian library system. The project's target was the microfilming of Russia's Civil War newspapers. This venture as envisioned by its creators has not developed into a model cooperative project for a number of professional and personal reasons. Currently, discussions are underway to microfilm the newspapers in the Russian State Library's inhouse laboratory since practically all publications are in the holdings of the former Lenin State Library.

Another cooperative project initiated by the Library of Congress and the All-Russia State Library for Foreign Literature involves a number of other regional libraries. This project began with microfilming titles from the All-Russia State Library for Foreign Literature's early-twentieth-century newspapers and will be expanded to microfilming collections of provincial newspapers. The first stage of this project was extremely important for acquiring basic skills in preservation microfilming. The second stage of microfilming provincial secular and clerical newspapers is far more complicated. The reasons are many: an obvious lack of experience in a truly multi-institutional cooperative project, a fear of lending holdings for microfilming outside the home institution, and an understandable reluctance to unbind volumes. As of the writing of this report, four regional libraries have agreed to take part in this second stage.

Other Microfilm Projects

Three years ago the Library of Congress started a preservation microfilming project in Pushkinskij Dom, an institute engaged in the research of Russian literature. The microfilming of early Russian manuscripts was blessed by Academician Likhachev, an ardent advocate of creating archival copies of the most valuable publications. One of the results of these projects was the development of Newsplan.

Over the past few years there have been other examples of coordinating efforts in preservation microfilming. One is the regional program for 1995-2000, designed to preserve the rare collections held by all libraries and museums in the Ural Region. Another instance is the pilot project formally established in 1994 of 13 regional and federal libraries (the All-Russia State Library for Foreign Literature, Russian State Library, State Public Historical Library) to preserve national and local newspapers. The implementation of this project is divided into two stages: the microfilming of the leading national newspapers and the microfilming of local imprints.

The decision to start with 13 national newspapers was a pragmatic one. All participating libraries have these 13 titles in their holdings and, with the exception of the Russian State Library and the State Public Historical Library, would prefer to get rid of the originals for space considerations and collection development priorities.

Microfilm Storage Facilities

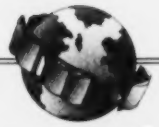
Another crucial factor influencing the decision to start with national newspapers was the general absence of library vaults (microfilm storage facilities). As a result, Repronics Ltd., Tula, the vendor commissioned to microfilm materials, also will provide special storage for a limited number of masters produced in the project's framework.

This kind of preservation, which originated in the military-industrial complex, has turned out to be both fruitful and promising. As discussed above, preservation microfilming in libraries simply did not exist, although in major libraries materials were duplicated for lending purposes. None of the libraries thought seriously about producing archival microfilms because environmental conditions were (and still are) bad even for service copies, let alone archival ones. Concurrently, however, the military-industrial complex has had a well-developed system of microfilming, processing, storing, and duplicating of microforms. When Russia's economic restructuring compelled the military complex to seek civic partners, the military's microfilming expertise and the libraries' need for such knowledge dovetailed.

Having partially solved the vault problem, at least for national newspapers, the project coordinators—the All-Russia State Library for Foreign Literature and Repronics Ltd.—next aimed to persuade the government to give libraries space in the existing governmental vaults. In late 1995, the Ministry of Culture began to nurture an ambitious project of the preservation microfilming of book monuments. It has inevitably encountered the same main obstacle as the pilot project—that is, the absence of microfilm storage facilities. Consequently, all current microfilming efforts are directed toward finding support in the upper structures of the State Duma and government. The main goal of these efforts is to not only get space in party and military vaults but to raise funding for microfilming the most valuable and rare materials.

While these efforts are producing results, Russian librarians are learning quality microfilming procedures. The All-Russia State Library for Foreign Literature and Repronics Ltd. already have run two roundtables for pilot project members and for all those interested in microfilming. The most recent, held in February 1996, was intentionally focused on existing standards, including the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) and the Research Libraries Group (RLG) guidelines on preservation microfilming.

Aware of the growing interest in reformatting, the All-Russia State Library for Foreign Literature in conjunction with Repronics Ltd. plans to publish a series of articles on preservation microfilming in one of Russia's leading professional library journals.



Preservation Challenges

There is an entire range of existing and future preservation challenges to consider from the point of view of past and present experience within both the individual library setting and a broad, nationwide context. These major challenges embrace: a commitment to raising public awareness, the reconsideration of managerial approaches, a strategy to create preservation centers, responses to emerging technology, the use of permanent paper, experimental efforts in mass treatment of documents, and the restructuring of educational patterns.

Raising Awareness

The possibility of raising public awareness of the magnitude of materials at risk and the necessity of urgent action is seen by some librarians as nothing less than utopic. Such skepticism is unavoidable when the greater part of the Russian population is struggling with its own physical survival. Under these conditions it is difficult to consider the survival of endangered materials as important, however historically and culturally valuable they are.

Fortunately, this is counterbalanced by future-oriented and inventive professionals. Whether the general public is receptive to appeals from librarians and archivists depends greatly on how convinced librarians and archivists themselves are of preservation needs—and how proactive they are in depicting deteriorating books, disappearing collections, and disintegrating newspapers. National concern for the fate of Russia's heritage can be promoted only by those who know the real situation. Knowledge of the danger that library materials are in as a result of neglect, self-destruction, acts of war, and lack of resources is limited to a considerably small segment of the population. Clearly, launching a well-planned and persistent campaign on educating the public about preservation problems is a significant challenge under current conditions.

There has been no such large-scale, aggressive campaign on a national level. The Ryazan regional library was the only pioneer to broadcast *Slow Fires* over regional television, its aim to bring attention to the problems traditionally treated as merely and purely professional, not societal. Regrettably, similar actions, such as using this effective tool through the mass media, have not become common.

One of the objectives of the newly created preservation division within the fledgling Russian Library Association is raising preservation awareness not only within the profession—a challenge in and of itself—but among all library constituencies and learned and influential users. The goal is to introduce the idea of preserving Russia's national heritage, which would then lead to the awareness, understanding, positive perception, and support that would serve as the basis for designing and structuring preservation actions. The association's aim is to encourage real help and not just a promise of support. Russia's general economic conditions preclude quick results, but the profession must begin now to change its environment.

Management

Librarians need to introduce modifications into their strategic planning if they are to change successfully preservation's image among people outside the profession. In Russia, preservation is considered a separate unit within a conservation department. But in reality preservation is a necessary component everywhere, touching on not only the materials but security and the library buildings themselves. As such, preservation is not just one isolated item but many that must be centrally managed. It is this concept that has not been accepted in the

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Russian system, but top leadership should be involved, and this concept must be considered if Russia's libraries are to save the country's cultural heritage.

The new ideology of access over ownership is likely to shift an almost exclusive orientation on acquisition toward preservation as the means of access. Under the current financial crisis this imperative is especially challenging. It is clear that a changing environment necessitates changes in an institution's mission statement. Similarly, the preservation mission statement derived from the overall library mission should reflect fundamental transformations in the country at large.

But Russian libraries do not have clear mission statements as a basic instrument in making effective decisions, including those of preservation. Nor do many Russian libraries give examples of proper preservation planning. This unfortunate situation is reflected in the analysis of the 1994 questionnaire mentioned earlier that was distributed among 50 regional libraries. Nearly 60% of the respondents stated the absence of comprehensive preservation plans; 30% reported the existence of partial preservation plans; and only 10% had incorporated comprehensive plans into their overall library administration.

In the most advanced libraries, preservation activity includes shelving maintenance, climate control, collection security, disaster preparedness, book mending and restoration, reformatting, and personnel training. Of these aspects, shelving maintenance and climate control (regulated by existing national standards) and collection security are generally understood as necessary components. Regrettably, such understanding is more declarative in nature than implemented. Moreover, preservation is associated with the restoration of rare books. General collections are ranked second, despite the fact that in the course of time these materials will acquire value similar to rare and special collections if they are not preserved now.

The absence of allocations is given often as a reason for not incorporating preservation plans into a library's calculations. This is a fallacy in administrative thinking, since funding is always limited, and administrators should understand that unless they have detailed preservation knowledge and a firm grasp of priorities, any funding they do receive will be used inefficiently. The absence or lack of resources need not prevent planning. On the contrary, well-documented and justified strategies are the basis for fund-raising to fulfill both short- and long-term tactics. In the case of zero funding, the first step is to establish low-cost preservation policies and to educate users and staff in the proper handling of library materials.

Another common drawback is the absence of a preservation administrator. The responsibilities for managing restoration and conservation, microfilming departments (if they exist), commercial binding, shelf-maintenance, retention policies, the library facilities, and whatever else falls under the rubric of running a library are scattered among middle managers who report to different senior managers at the top level, either to the director or deputies. In order for preservation to succeed, it must be centrally managed.

Managerial drawbacks to putting preservation into practice as potential causes for mistakes and misorientation are being eliminated, however slowly, in the process of expanding management's preservation knowledge. The challenge is to foster this process in as many institutions as possible.

Preservation Centers

The magnitude of preservation problems covering such a huge territory is a driving force for setting up preservation centers in cities other than Moscow and St. Petersburg. For a number of years the ongoing appeal to create preservation centers was not followed by any action. Before perestroika, when financial constraints did exist but not on scale with today's, such centers were envisioned but not realized. Only in recent years has there appeared a restoration center, in Vladimir, and a state-of-the-art laboratory for conservation and restoration at

Moscow's Russian State Humanities University, which serves the needs of the university libraries in various regions.

Russia's immense size requires that multidimensional preservation activities be organized around well-equipped and powerful structures. Such ambitious plans exist in Tomsk (with a University library as a center for Siberia), and Omsk and Kazan (as microfilming centers). Expected output will depend on the level of investment, which is the most critical issue. Still, investing substantially into several centers versus scattering funds throughout dozens of libraries will prove to be the more rational path since space, equipment, and human resources can be used in a more effective way.

Limitations of Digital Technology

In Russia, unlike North America or Western Europe, there is a strong belief that converting images from paper to digital media would solve all preservation and access problems. Assessment of a number of projects demonstrates a tendency to focus attention on introducing innovative digital technology versus traditional, reliable, and time-proven conservation technologies. This attitude toward digitization as a panacea is rooted in a deficiency of information, training, and experience. Limits inherent in digital reformatting are not perceived by librarians who are full of enthusiasm to preserve and make at-risk materials accessible. It is imperative that librarians receive further education in the rapidly changing field of technology. In particular, they must be taught about the necessary refreshing of data and filing standards for access and preservation. In addition, they must have a firm grasp on the financial implications of preservation methods and technology.

Of great importance in this connection is the experience gained by institutions that have already worked with identifying, developing, and evaluating new electronic means of preservation and access. There are at least two libraries in Russia capable of giving some guidelines on the financial, legal, technological, and dissemination aspects of digital preservation. These are the Russian State Library and the Library of the Russian Academy of Science, the latter of which is involved in the Memory of the World program. The Library of the Academy of Sciences has already a prototype of the *Radzivill Chronicle* on CD, and the Russian State Library has digitized a number of Russian manuscripts. Along with the Memory of the World program, the Russian State Library is working on a cooperative project of digitization of Russian posters. The CD-ROM *100 Years of Russian Posters* will be published by K.G. Saur (Munich) in 1997. It is also expected that these two institutions will continue to contribute to the development of imaging technology in Russia.

Permanent Paper

In Russia, the permanent paper sign is all-too-rarely seen. Researchers and a limited number of archivists and librarians (mainly from research, restoration, and conservation laboratories) are probably the only professionals knowledgeable and concerned enough to use permanent paper. Their aspirations for introducing acid-free paper into paper manufacturing and publishing industries seem almost unrealistic. But the challenge remains. Calls for a radical change of paper production technology could be simultaneous with a campaign to disseminate knowledge of the poor quality of current papers and the problems inherent in the traditional manufacturing of paper.

One necessary precondition of success in this direction is research testifying to the potential threat of acidic paper. In the past, many researchers in the field of preservation, such as U.P. Niuksha, pushed ardently for the use of acid-free paper in the publishing industry, particularly for legal deposit copies. By the 1990s archivists had developed a system of introducing acid-free paper into the governmental document flow. A supportive infrastructure also was designed and even partially implemented. But the collapse of the Soviet Union put an end to these far-reaching plans since the acid-free paper mill is in Estonia, outside Russia's borders.

The paper currently in use has a distinct tendency to deteriorate. The findings of a small-scale research project conducted by the All-Russia State Library for Foreign Literature may be used as convincing arguments for critiquing the paper production and publishing industries. The project showed that for titles published between 1860 and 1985, 29 percent of foreign titles were published on non-acidic (neutral) paper, as compared to seven percent of domestic titles. For titles published between 1990 and 1995, 75 percent of foreign titles were published on non-acidic (neutral) paper, as compared to 16 percent of domestic titles. The trend toward using neutral paper has accelerated far faster in other parts of the world than in Russia.

Training

Russian libraries are being transformed into complex and dynamic institutions, and the access to and preservation of materials in different formats are becoming more difficult. This suggests that staff must be up to managing problems inherited from the past and be able to cope with the transformations that are part of progress.

Yet some of the problems libraries face in the field of preservation are due to drawbacks in basic and continuing education. There are 17 institutions of higher learning and culture across Russia that provide graduate education for professional librarians. Representative of the current level of education is the Moscow State University of Culture. Its training module could serve as a prototype for other institutes. This idea stems from the former centralized approach to designing the uniform structure and content of the syllabi of academic library departments. Slight variations that have been introduced into the curriculum have not affected teaching preservation because preservation remains a neglected field unlike, say, automation, and the introduction of considerable change into the accepted model is hardly possible without significant financial allocations.

The traditional curriculum includes 40 course hours that cover the handling and maintenance of collections in stacks, environmental conditions, storage standards, and security. In theory this course of study should make students knowledgeable in the preservation of library materials and provide a basis and stimulus for further self-education and specialization. In practice graduates are simply unaware of major problems related to preservation, and this lack of knowledge usually produces a lack of interest in this sphere of librarianship. A similar situation exists in library colleges that educate junior staff and dedicate only 16 hours to the course on library collections, including the unit on preservation. This vicious cycle is recognized by many faculty and staff who admit that the current level of education does not correspond to the necessarily multifaceted manifestations of preservation and access.

But if formal education has been providing at least an introductory course in certain areas of preservation, if only at a minimal level, the training of technicians and conservationists does not exist whatsoever. Most qualified conservationists acquired theirs skills on-site working next to colleagues whose experience and expertise were a result of long years of self-training.

Frequent calls on the part of librarians to restructure education so that it could match preservation needs have not been in vain. A growing interest in preserving Russia's national heritage has resulted in attempts to address this interest by bringing change into current programs. Some programs have been successful, others not. The Moscow State University of Culture failed because under current economic conditions the library department received neither funding nor equipment to implement an in-depth training program. On a more positive note, recently the Russian State Humanity University developed a successful postgraduate program for conservationists. Ten students are enrolled annually on a fee basis.

To fill the vacuum in the training of professional conservationists, in 1993 a group of dedicated librarians and archivists set up Raritet, an independent, nongovernmental, and nonprofit school of restoration. The heart and soul of the school are specialists from different spheres: chemistry, biology, computer science, the history of the book, economy, and history.

Conservationists teaching at the school have rich experience in working with unique documents from library collections. The school runs both three-year and one-year programs. It also organizes short training courses of 260 hours that have proven to be the best option for working librarians. Out of the 260 hours, 120 are given to lectures on the history of writing and binding; the history of the book; the chemical, physical, and biological qualities of different materials; and the technology of paper, parchment, and velum treatment. Learning practical restoration and binding techniques accounts for the remaining 140 hours. There is a moderate tuition.

Wanting to extend the knowledge of preservation issues, Raritet's directors developed a course on the minor repairs of books, which was commended by the Ministry of Education. There are also plans to introduce a new subject into the curricula of several Moscow secondary schools.

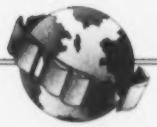
Along with this training, Raritet has undertaken several other projects, namely: finding sponsors for the restoration of unique documents; organizing annual Moscow exhibitions on artistic binding in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture; restoring incunabula and rare books from the collections of the Russian State Library; publishing the book, *Save and Preserve a Book*; organizing travelling exhibitions of students' works; and providing assistance in purchasing supplies and equipment for restoration and preservation purposes.

Concerns for a well-educated professional staff are valid because of a long-held custom of recruiting people who are not professional librarians or graduates of institutes of culture or library colleges. It has been assumed that librarianship can be acquired by working in a library. As a result, in the vast majority of Russian libraries conventionally trained librarians are often in the minority. For example, in the Russian State Library's Library for Foreign Literature, only about 29% of the overall staff have library science diplomas from the institutes of culture.

Such staff composition makes continuing education a vital necessity. Creating chances for continuing education in preservation has become a part of the mission of a number of libraries, including the Russian State Library, Russian National Library, Library of the Academy of Sciences, and All-Russia State Library for Foreign Literature, which are capable of supporting internship programs and organizing seminars, workshops, and conferences. The mounting success of internship programs, especially for technicians, is easily explained: Training is performed in the real conservation environment.

Yet, seminars, workshops, and conferences on preservation as an indispensable component of continuing education are not as frequent as, for example, seminars on automation or acquisition. Moreover, the subject matter of these professional gatherings is by and large chemistry and biology at a very sophisticated level. Too little attention is given to conceptual aspects of preservation, such as choice of which materials to preserve.

To assist individuals in acquiring a basic knowledge of preservation, the Russian State Library, Russian National Library, All-Russia State Library for Foreign Literature, and Library of the Academy of Sciences have published a number of books on conservation and restoration. But this is not enough. The inadequacy of existing forms of continuing education for all librarians is quite tangible. As part of a forthcoming approach, the Russian Library Association and its section on preservation intend to emphasize disaster preparedness, environmental control, preservation administration, and microfilming as a training ground for preservation managers and collection curators. Much of the effort in this evolving, systematic approach to continuing education will be based on low-cost preservation policies as most tailored to libraries' current needs.



Closing Remarks

Many of the problems connected with preservation in Russian libraries can be solved only if the state really shares the great responsibility it has historically imposed on libraries. There is no other alternative to the successful development of preservation programs.

Russian libraries have many things in their favor: a huge intellectual potential, a growing commitment to preservation, rich experience gained over years, and a vision for future activity on national and institutional levels. These are all extremely important, but it is unlikely that libraries alone will put into action the plans that already exist for preserving Russia's national heritage, nor should they be expected to. Libraries require not only verbal support but financial resources as well from the long-expected transformation of the Russian economy to which libraries have been contributing since the beginning of perestroika.

The Commission on Preservation and Access
1400 16th Street, NW, Suite 715
Washington, DC 20036-2217
Phone (202) 939-3400 • FAX (202) 939-3407